



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

February 14, 2014

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To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
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From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

MOTION TO INSTRUCT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND THE SACRAMENTO ADVOCATES TO SUPPORT SB 573 (LIEU) (ITEM NO. 3, AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 18, 2014)

Item No. 3 on the February 18, 2014 Agenda is a motion by Supervisor Yaroslavsky to instruct the Chief Executive Officer and the Sacramento Advocates to support SB 573 by Senator Ted Lieu.

Existing Law

Existing law allows the Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol to issue an emergency vehicle permit if the Commissioner makes a finding that the vehicle is to be used to respond to emergency calls for fire or law enforcement, for the immediate preservation of life or property, or for the apprehension of law violators. Owners, including hospitals and private ambulance companies that are issued an emergency vehicle permit are allowed to equip the vehicle with red flashing lights, a siren, and other equipment, and are exempt from most rules of the road when responding to an emergency. Current law prohibits hospitals from moving emergency equipment, trailers, personnel, medications, and related items to a healthcare facility or the scene of an emergency without a police escort, except under specific exemptions.

SB 573 (Lieu) - Emergency Vehicles

SB 573 (Lieu), which as amended on January 15, 2014, would expand the types of vehicles that may be authorized by the Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol as emergency vehicles to include any vehicle owned and operated by a hospital designated by Los Angeles County as a Disaster Resource Center (DRC) hospital. The

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authorization would apply exclusively to vehicles used to transport mass-casualty decontamination apparatus, medical supplies, lifesaving equipment, or personnel to the scene of an emergency at the request of the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Agency or the California Emergency Management Agency. SB 573 would also require the designated hospitals to maintain insurance coverage for the vehicles and provide emergency vehicle operation training for designated staff operating the vehicles.

In 2004, the County implemented the Disaster Resource Center Program to facilitate a coordinated healthcare response in the event of an emergency or disaster. The Program is overseen by the Department of Health Services, Emergency Medical Services Agency (EMS) and consists of 13 designated hospitals working in 10 regions throughout the County to coordinate with over 100 acute care hospitals to plan, train for, and facilitate a regional disaster response.

The 13 Disaster Resource Center hospitals have purchased emergency vehicles and are equipped with tent shelters to house up to 40 patients and caches of emergency equipment and pharmaceutical supplies. EMS provides magnets and stickers to the DRC hospitals which are placed on the sides of the DRC emergency vehicles that are used to transport equipment and supplies in times of emergency deployment. According to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, the sponsor of SB 573, while the stickers are helpful, they are inadequate to move emergency vehicles through access control lines or to navigate through traffic congestion during an emergency event.

The Department of Health Services, EMS indicates that allowing the Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol to issue emergency vehicle permits to certain vehicles owned by the 13 DRC hospitals would facilitate the prompt delivery of personnel and equipment to victims in the event of a disaster by allowing the hospitals to equip vehicles with red lights, sirens, flashing lights, and other equipment.

SB 573 is sponsored by Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and supported by: the Beverly Hills Fire Department; Beverly Hills Police Department; California Hospital Association; California Hospital Medical Center; Centinela Hospital Medical Center; City of Beverly Hills; City of West Hollywood; Culver City Fire Department; HCH at Brotman Medical Center; Henry Mayo Newhall Memorial Hospital; LAC+USC Medical Center; Marina Del Rey Hospital; PIH Health Hospital; Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center; Saint John's Health Center; St. Mary Medical Center Disaster Resource Center; UCLA Medical Center; and West Hollywood Mayor Jeffrey Prang. There is no registered opposition on file. SB 573 passed the Senate Floor by a vote of 33 to 0 on January 23, 2014. This measure is currently awaiting referral to an Assembly Policy Committee.

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Conclusion

There is no existing Board policy to support legislation which would authorize the Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol to designate as emergency vehicles certain vehicles owned and operated by one of the County's 13 designated Disaster Resource Center Hospital Programs; therefore, support for SB 573 is a matter for Board policy determination.

WTF:RA
MR:VE:ma

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel